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**Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen.** 2013. *English Historical Pragmatics*. (Edinburgh Textbooks on the English Language — Advanced.) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 9780748644681. 236 pages.

**Reviewed by Joanna Kopaczyk (University of Edinburgh and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)**

The advanced series of textbooks on central approaches to English language study, published by Edinburgh University Press, has now been complemented with a volume on historical pragmatics, co-authored by Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen. The impact of Jucker and Taavitsainen on the inception and evolution of historical pragmatics is unquestionable, given their involvement in the development of relevant methodologies, tools and resources as well as their (co-) authoring or (co-)editing of the central publications in the field. Here, they give a powerful demonstration of the pragmatic approach to English from a historical perspective, taking the reader through methodological discussions and multiple case studies, and illustrating the usage of particular analytical tools with additional exercises and suggestions for further study.

The textbook gives a full and comprehensive overview of the field of English historical pragmatics. Chapters 1 to 3 offer a theoretical background to the study of communication-in-context, from a historical angle. Chapter 1 defines historical pragmatics by explaining the “social” and “theoretical” approaches to pragmatics, set against an exceptionally clear overview of the changes in the basic premises of linguistic thought (“paradigm shifts”). Chapter 2 presents different approaches to data in historical pragmatics and is followed in Chapter 3 by a step-by-step guide to choosing appropriate methods to answer historical–pragmatic questions. The second part of the book concentrates on specific linguistic features that are interesting from a pragmatic point of view: discourse markers and interjections (Chapter 4), terms of address (Chapter 5), speech acts (Chapter 6) and forms of im/politeness (Chapter 7). The discussion becomes more theoretical again in Chapter 8, which addresses the processes of grammaticalisation and pragmaticalisation. Subsequent chapters are devoted to larger communicative units and strategies. Chapter 9 concentrates on genres and text types and their significance for pragmatic inquiries. Chapter 10 features scientific and medical discourse while Chapter 11 considers news discourse. Chapter 12 deals with narratives which exhibit some of the

linguistic features discussed earlier in the book. To comply with the textbook format, the authors have designed engaging, hands-on tasks for every chapter and have included a useful and up-to-date list of electronic resources and comprehensive references.

Jucker and Taavitsainen's textbook is grounded in the social approach to pragmatics, making use of the "actual data [containing] a lot of contextual information about the conversationalists and the context in which the interaction is taking place" (p.3). Their emphasis is upon how communication was constructed in the past, what influenced emergent meanings in interaction and how language change can be interpreted in view of the social conditions of language use. Throughout the book, the authors draw attention both to research areas where substantial historical pragmatic work has already been done (e.g., address terms, see pp.72, 76) and to questions still awaiting further investigation (e.g., early speech recordings, pp.26–7). This serves to show the versatility of the field and its potential directions of growth. The authors strike a good balance between stating the obvious and explaining the necessary rudiments of trade. Whilst their readers are expected to have a grounding in linguistics and, to some extent, in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, Jucker and Taavitsainen are careful to clarify how particular terms and ideas are to be understood in the book. The pragmatic concepts and phenomena under discussion are well defined and are illustrated with rich examples from original historical texts — many of which have not been quoted in a textbook context before. In this way, the authors invite the readers to look for pragmatic phenomena outside the staple "history of English" set of course-book texts. For instance, they draw on *Boethius* in the discussion of the pragmaticalisation of *well*. In addition to the usual Chaucer and Shakespeare examples, they include Middle English medical and scientific texts in the discussion of genre features, and passages from Early Modern English courtroom proceedings when concentrating on address forms and politeness. There is an excellent discussion of the earliest English rendition of the story of Little Red Riding Hood (1729) from a stylistic viewpoint, as well as snapshots of present-day linguistic choices in electronic media throughout the book. Various general and specialised corpora are also employed as sources of illustrative quotations and material for exercises and further study: from the classic *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* serving as a first-hand resource for simple searches and intuition checks, to the vast and recent *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA) for more quantitative assessments. To engage the reader in methodological decision-making, the authors assess the relevance of particular sources for a given research question and point towards arising problems, as in the case of Google Books' N-gram Viewer (although suggestions for further reading might have been included — for example, Nunberg 2010 or Davies 2012).

The textbook presents and discusses the most important theoretical notions and conceptualisations and helps the reader to select appropriate methods for a historical pragmatic study of English. The authors are always cautious of pitfalls when selecting a given approach, explicitly so in the case of corpus methods, (e.g., in terms of research replicability and data decontextualisation). In Chapter 2 on data, we find a discussion of the levels of authorship and embedding (pp. 21–2), whilst reference is also made to an alternative but equally important treatment (by Culpeper and Kytö 2010). Chapter 3 includes a very informative section on the employment of specific corpus methods: KWIC concordances, keyword analyses, collocations and clusters (lexical bundles or n-grams), and both the free AntConc software and the licenced WordSmith tools are mentioned (p. 46). In the chapter on address terms, there is an excellent historical overview of the development of the T/V distinction in European languages, after Brown and Gilman (1960), while Chapter 6 contains a very lucid introduction to speech acts, showing how the initial philosophical inquiry developed into a pragmatic research agenda. The authors highlight corpus-linguistic notions, such as recall and precision, and suggest several ways of interrogating historical corpora in search of speech acts, including ‘illocutionary force indicating devices’ (p. 94–5). For politeness (Chapter 7), the well-established first-order and second-order distinction is introduced, and the authors show how socially acceptable or favourable linguistic behaviour depends on the relevant cultural setting, beliefs, values and customs. With reference to the notions of positive and negative politeness, one might wish for a more thorough introduction to the philosophical background of facework (including Erving Goffman’s work on face and deference from a psychological and sociological perspective — e.g., Goffman 1967).

Moving on to “macrostructures of genre and discourse” (p. 146) in Chapter 9, the authors stress that these levels also affect language use and interpretation. Since genres function in a social context, the authors recall the concept of a discourse community and pay attention to how both the authors and audience shape genre practices. The general message is that in historical pragmatics there is no escape from a meticulous analysis of the socio-historical background. Jucker and Taavitsainen present an overview of approaches which have inspired historical studies of genre: systemic-functional linguistics (where the lack of a specific reference to Halliday’s (1973, 1978) work is probably an unintended omission), Biber’s multi-dimensional studies (1988 and later), text linguistics and a basic taxonomy of text types and strategies, and cognitive approaches evoking expectations in the audience by specific linguistic triggers. In Chapters 10 and 11, the authors consider the impact of dissemination and literacy on the development of medical and informational genres, showcasing specialised corpora (*Middle English Medical Texts* and *Early Modern English Medical Texts*, and the *Zurich English Newspaper*

corpus). There is a fascinating account of news dissemination prior to and at the time of the printing revolution, the emergence of new information-driven genres and the role of censorship. The reader is also invited to consider the frequency of news reporting and the evolving range of topics, and to reflect on how technology affects communication patterns, and how it negotiates public and private communicative space. The interfaces of private and public writing and reading practices become relevant again in the context of narrative in Chapter 12.

One of the best features of this textbook is its clarity and comprehensiveness. The discussion is well sign-posted throughout, while the original quotes used in chapter titles immediately capture the reader's attention and give a flavour of each chapter's contents. Several visual aids are offered for a better understanding of pragmatic concepts and phenomena. The best and most helpful include the model of communicative immediacy and distance (p. 21; Koch 1999), the map of inserts and pragmatic noise (p. 56; Biber et al. 1999; and Culpeper and Kytö 2010) and the three circles of corpus-based speech-act retrieval (p. 95). Jucker and Taavitsainen make a very good job of explaining trends in historical pragmatics, summarising existing scholarship through a wide selection of case studies, and concluding with some ideas for future study.

When the textbook goes into second edition, which is very likely given the variety and amount of historical pragmatic research carried out at the moment, it would be worth considering a few revisions and improvements. For instance, some chapters, especially the chapter on data, have a very pronounced bias towards the speech of the past, mostly because the bulk of research in pragmatics is geared towards recovering patterns of spoken communication. However, from the introductory chapters in this textbook we learn that all instances of communication-in-context will be interesting for a historical pragmaticist. So "natural and unconstrained face-to-face conversations from earlier periods" (p. 20), demanding and interesting as they may be to recover, may not be the sole point of interest. In addition to orality, literacy itself deserves attention — and not only as a key to spoken patterns. Communicative immediacy is interesting but distanced genres can also be fruitfully studied from a pragmatic perspective. Indeed, the authors say that "[r]esearchers are beginning to appreciate the intricate nature of written data from past periods and recognise the nature of written code and its development from a pragmatic angle" (p. 26), but this perspective is not as salient in the book. Readers of an advanced textbook are encouraged to show a large degree of independence and look for further references on their own, taking the suggestions provided after each chapter as a starting point. To enrich the discussion, however, more references would be useful. For instance, Chapter 3 invites a reference to Ratia's (2011) study on texts pro and contra tobacco. A reference to a recent important paper on *hwæt* in the initial line of *Beowulf* (Walkden 2013) may be given in Section 2.2.2

when discussing punctuation practices and editing, and in Section 4.3 on interjections. In Chapter 8, in the context of pragmaticalisation, ritualistic language use and taboo, the excellent study of swearing by Hughes (1991) could be useful.

This textbook will definitely prove popular with students and academics. Not only does it present complex ideas and methodological problems in English historical pragmatics with clarity and expertise, it is also an engaging and enjoyable read, full of amusing quotations and intriguing historical background details. The textbook can serve as a leading text in historical English pragmatics for a semester-long course. It can also provide self-contained sections to be included in more general courses on the history of English, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and even literary studies. It is a perfect testimony to the breadth and depth of the field and will definitely inspire both neophytes of historical pragmatics as well as seasoned specialists.

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*Reviewer's address*

Joanna Kopaczyk  
Angus McIntosh Centre for Historical Linguistics  
Linguistics and English Language, DSB 2.01  
University of Edinburgh  
3 Charles Street  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9AD  
UK  
  
Joanna.Kopaczyk@ed.ac.uk

*About the reviewer*

**Joanna Kopaczyk** is a historical linguist with an interest in corpus methods, formulaic language and the history of Scots. Her recent books include a study of standardising patterns in early legal discourse, interpreted against a rich socio-historical background of early Scottish towns (*The Legal Language of Scottish Burghs: Standardisation and Lexical Bundles (1380–1560)*, Oxford University Press, 2013), and the first volume to explore the applications of the notion of a 'community of practice' to historical linguistic research, co-edited with Andreas H. Jucker (*Communities of Practice in the History of English*, John Benjamins, 2013). Currently, she works as a post-doctoral research assistant on the AHRC-funded project on the grapho-phonology of Older Scots (*From Inglis to Scots (FITS): Mapping Sounds to Spellings*) and holds an assistant professorship at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.